Archeological Testing for Proposed Road and Parking Improvements Appomattox Court House National Historical Park Appomattox, Virginia

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Archeological testing of proposed road and parking improvements at Appomattox Court House National Historical Park did not identify any archeological resources that would be effected by the project. Test excavations at the proposed Connor's Cabin parking area and the proposed new parking area and trail extension at the North Carolina Monument revealed either stratigraphy associated with agricultural plowing, or grading associated with road construction. Visual examination of the existing road beds indicated that the proposed widening of Routes 200 and 201 will not disturb ground outside of the existing road shoulders established by their initial grading. No additional archeological activities are recommended for completion of the proposed project.

INTRODUCTION

Appomattox Court House National Historical Park in Appomattox, Virginia (Figure 1) proposes to conduct a program of road and parking improvements in three locations along existing public roads (Figure 2). Three actions are proposed:

Route 200 (Matthews Road)- Access to Private Residences: The existing roadway will be widened to meet NPS Park Road Standards from an existing 15 feet (4.2 meters) to 20 feet (6.0 meters). The road base will be excavated to the depth of less than 0.5 feet (0.25 meters).

Route 201 - Access to Private Residences: The existing roadway will be widened from an existing 10 feet (3.0 meters) to 20 feet (6.0 meters). The road base will be excavated to the depth of less than 0.5 feet (0.25 meters). A ten car parking area will be constructed to provide visitor access to Connor's Cabin. Measuring 100 (30 meters) feet by 35 feet (10 meters), the parking area will be excavated to the depth of less than 0.5 feet (0.25 meters).

Route 205 - Entrance to North Carolina Monument. The existing parking area for the North Carolina Monument will be obliterated and a new parking area measuring approximately 75 feet (24 meters) by 100 feet (35 meters) will be constructed to eliminate hazardous site conditions entering and exiting the site. The parking area will be excavated to the depth of less than 0.5 feet (0.25 meters). A new access trail of stabilized turf will be constructed through an agricultural field paralleling Route 24 from the proposed parking area to the Raine monument to the east, and across an agricultural field and existing, overgrown roadbed to the west to the North Carolina Monument.

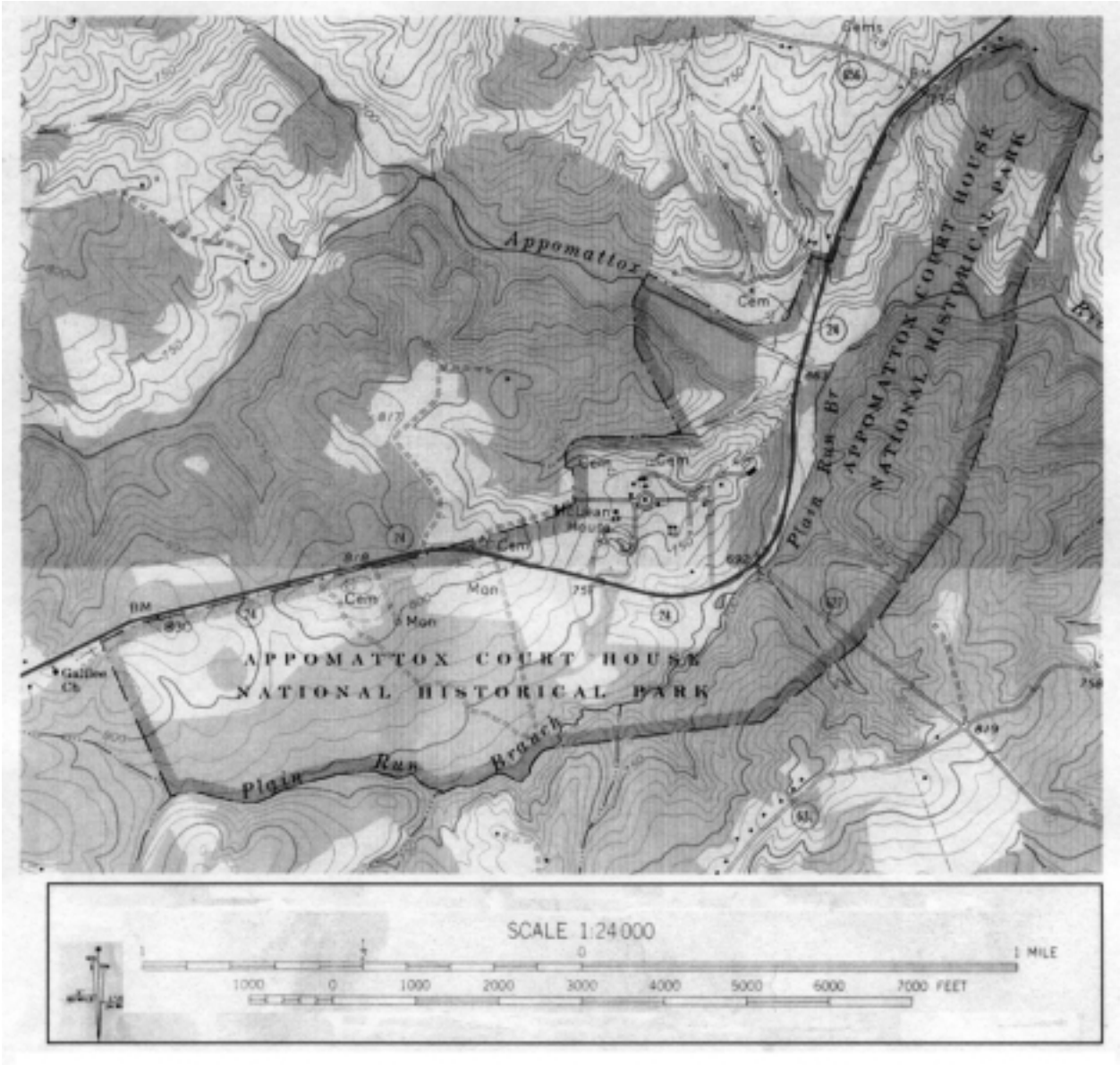

Figure 1: Appomattox Court House National Historical Park. Detail from USGS 7.5 Minute Series Appomattox Quadrangle.

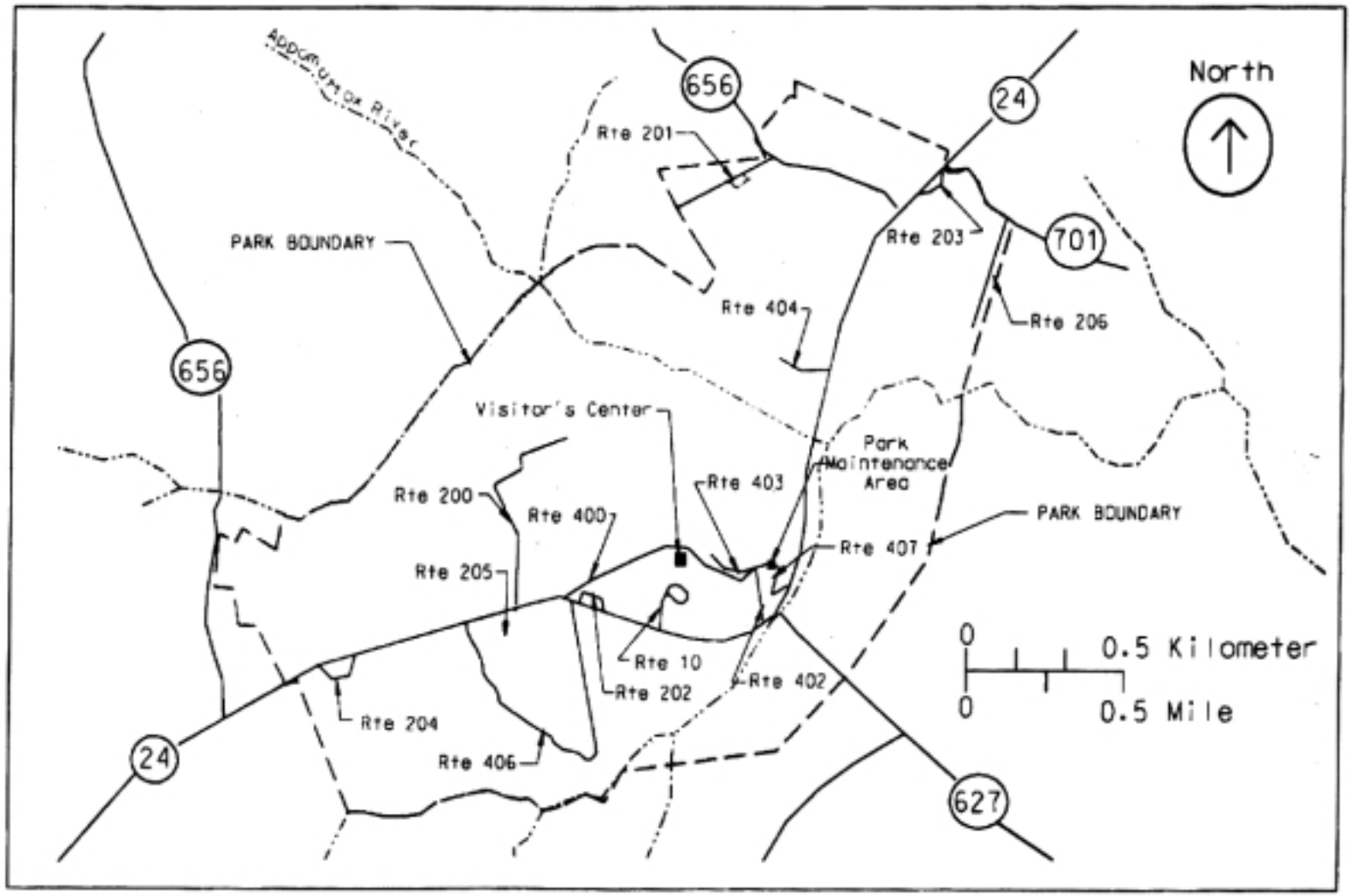

Figure 2: Proposed Road and Parking Improvements.

Historical Background:

(The following is a brief summary emphasizing significant events that may be reflected in the archeological record at the locations proposed for improvement. For additional background, see Luccketti et. al. 1992.)

Appomattox Court House, Virginia was the setting for the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia in April, 1865. The town was established as Clover Hill in 1819 as a stop on the Richmond to Lynchburg Stage Line, serving that function until the line was replaced by the South Side Railroad in 1854. Upon establishment of Appomattox County in 1845, its name changed to Appomattox Court House to reflect its status as the County seat. Throughout the Civil War, and until the burning of the courthouse in 1892, the town served as an administrative center although commercial activities in the area focused on the railroad town of Appomattox, where the courthouse was later rebuilt. After 1892, the village became another agricultural community until formation of the park in 1935.

Route 200 was constructed prior to park acquistion in 1982, appearing on the USGS map dating from 1968. Route 201 also lay outside the park's boundary, although it does not appear in the 1968 USGS map. Examination of records in the park indicate that it existed prior to the tract's acquisition, although its date of construction is unknown. The proposed Route 205 parking area lies within the original boundary of the park and of the three areas, contains the only known historic activity, that of General William R. Cox's North Carolina Infantry Brigade which is reported to have fired the last volley of the Army of Northern Virginia against Union Infantry. In 1961, the route of State Route 24, the former Richmond-Lynchburg Stage Road, was relocated from the center of the park to its present location, possible affecting the area for the proposed trail to the Raine Monument. No historic structures are known to have existed in any of the locations proposed for improvement.

Previous Archeological Investigations

Prior archeological investigations were conducted in the vicinity of the proposed Route 205 (North Carolina Monument) area in 1992 by the James River Institute for Archeology, Inc. in support of a water line and sewer force main project conducted by the National Park Service's Denver Service Center. Excavation of 136 shovel tests in Area B paralleling the southern edge of Route 24 indicated that most of the area had been disturbed to subsoil by road grading, especially the eastern end representing the proposed trail to the Raine Monument. At the western end, approximately 4000 feet west of the proposed parking area, a nineteenth century domestic refuse deposit was identified and listed as 44AP21. All fieldwork and laboratory analysis was conducted in conformance with "Archeology and Historic Preservation: Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines". All soils were passed through one-quarter inch hardware cloth.

ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Data Collection Procedures

All field investigations were conducted by the author on December 16 and 17, 1997. All fieldwork and laboratory analysis was conducted in conformance with "Archeology and Historic Preservation: Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines". All soils were passed through one-quarter inch hardware cloth with recovered artifacts placed in plastic bags by provenience. All excavation units and features were documented by photographs and measured drawings both in plan and in profile. Soil colors were recorded using the Munsell soil color system. All units were excavated to sterile soil with additional excavation conducted after final documentation to ensure that all soils containing archeological resources had been identified. Tests for parking areas measured 1.5 feet square and were excavated by natural stratigraphy. Tests for trail development measured 1.25 feet in diameter and were also excavated by natural stratigraphy. All recovered artifacts were examined after cleaning. With one exception, all recovered artifacts were associated with disturbed proveniences and consisted of modern beverage container glass. Amber containers were particularly favored. These artifacts will be stored at the Philadelphia Support Office until the construction project has been completed at which time they will be discarded. The single historic artifact will be cataloged to the standards of the Automated National Catalog System (ANCS) and along with the archival component of this project will be returned to the park for curation.

Connor's Cabin

The proposed location of the new parking area for Connor's cabin is located 0.1 miles west of intersection with State Road 656 below the crest of a knoll, 300 feet east of an intermittent stream. Lying at an elevation of roughly 785 feet, the site has a southern exposure and is used as pasture (frontispiece). Five tests, numbered from west to east, aligned 25 feet south of the existing road (Figure 3) were excavated to identify the potential for archeological resources. The results were as follows:

Test 1 measured 1.4 feet square. It had two strata:
0 - 0.75 feet: dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/4) clayey loam
0.75 - 0.8 feet: brownish orange (Munsell color 5YR 5/6) clay subsoil
No artifacts or features were recovered.

Test 2 measured 1.3 feet square. Located 25 feet east of Test 1, it had two strata:
0-0.65 feet: dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/4) clayey loam
0.65-0.7 feet: brownish orange (Munsell color 5YR 5/6) clay subsoil.
No artifacts or features were recovered.

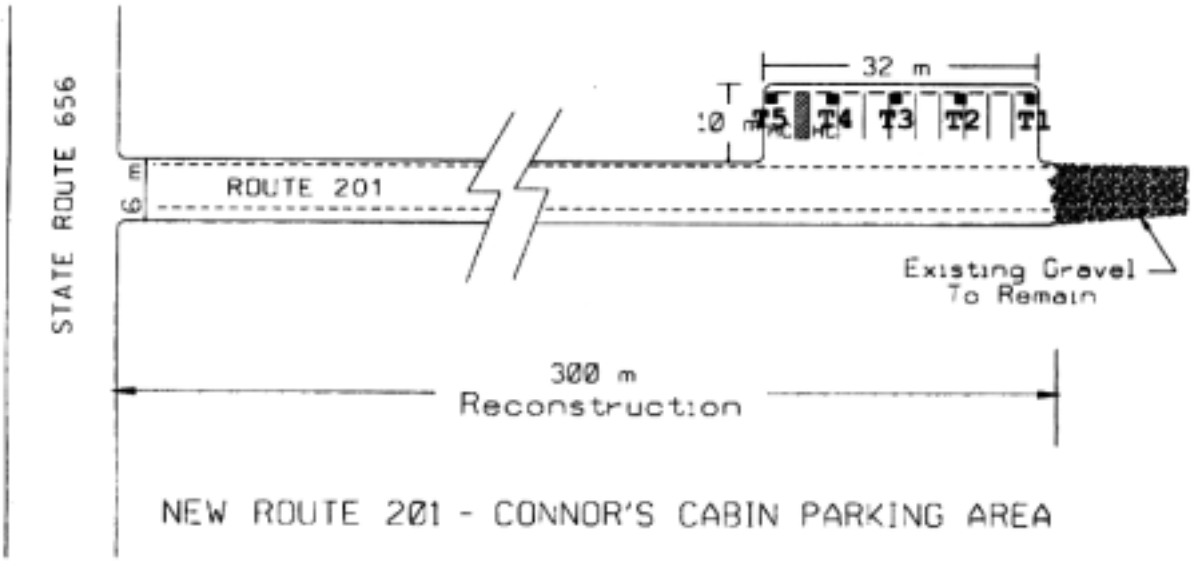

Figure 3: Proposed Improvements at Connor's Cabin with Archeological Tests.

Figure 4 Connor's Cabin Test 4.

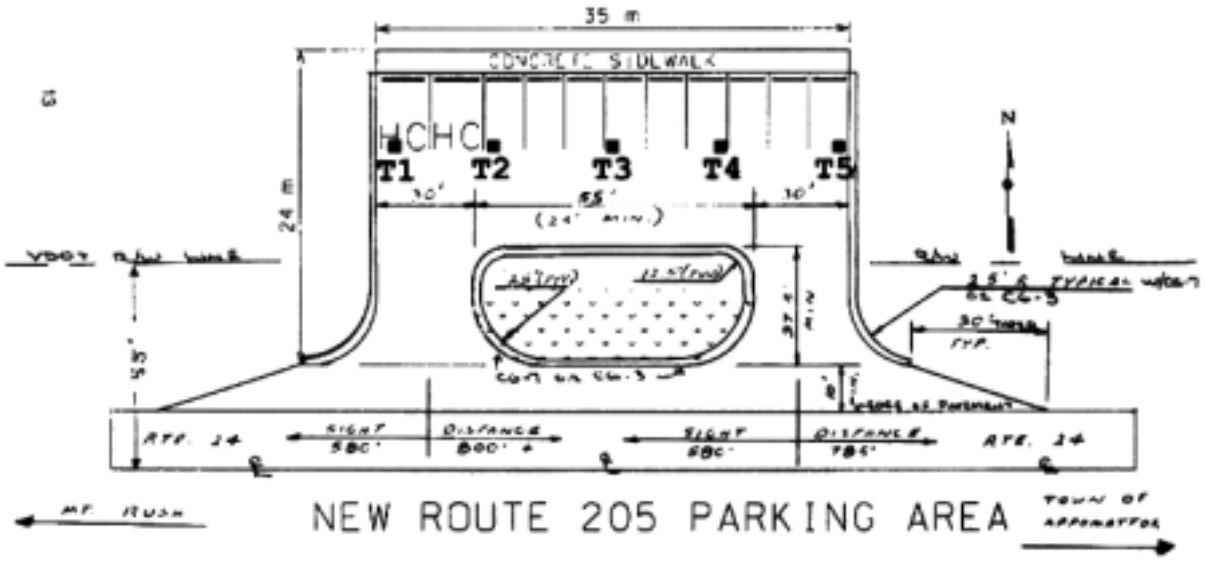

Figure 5: Archeological Tests at the Proposed Route 205 Parking Area.

Figure 6: Photograph of Test 2.

Test 3 was located 50 feet east of Test 1 at approximately the centerline of the proposed turnout. Measuring 1.4 feet square, the unit had two strata:
0 - 0.65 feet: dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/4) clayey loam
0.65 - 0.75 feet: brownish orange (Munsell color 5YR 5/6) clay subsoil
No artifacts were recovered. At the southwest corner of the test was a possible post hole measuring 0.5 feet in diameter containing dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/4) clayey loam with some charcoal. This probably represented an earlier version of the existing pasture fence and was not examined further.

Test 4 was located 75 feet east of Test 1 and 25 feet east of the centerline. It had two strata:
0 - 0.6 feet: 10YR3/4 clayey loam
0.6 - 0.7 feet: brownish orange (Munsell color 5YR 5/6) clay subsoil.
No artifacts were recovered and no features were identified.

Test 5 was located 75 feet east of Test 1, 50 feet east of the centerline, at the proposed eastern end of the parking area. It had two strata:
0 - 0.65 feet: dark yellowish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/4) clayey loam
0.65 - 0.75 feet: 10YR 3/6 + (red) clay subsoil
No artifacts or features were recovered.

Testing of the proposed parking area at Connor's Cabin did not identify any archeological resources, although the area's agricultural use was evidenced by the presence of typical plow zone stratigraphy.

Route 205 Parking Area and Trail

Parking Area

The proposed location of the Route 205 Parking Area lies on a roughly level terrace of 805 feet adjacent to an agricultural field. The proposed trail extensions follow the 805 foot contour to the east and west to the North Carolina and Raine monuments respectively. Archeological testing was conducted in the parking area and on the east trail. Testing by the James River Institute in 1991 for the sewer force main and water line established the absence of archeological resources along the proposed route of the west trail.

A baseline 60 feet south of Route 24 was established to align the tests which were numbered from east to west at 25 foot intervals. The results were as follows:

Test 1 was located at the eastern end of the proposed parking area . Measuring 1.4 feet square, it had two strata:
0 - 0.6 feet: very dark grayish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/2) humic loam with abundant medium-sized (0.25< feet) stones.
0.6 - 0.7 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
No artifacts or features were identified.

Test 2 was located 25 feet west of Test 1. Measuring 1.4 feet square, it had two strata:
0 - 0.6 feet: very dark grayish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/2) humic loam with abundant medium-sized (0.25< feet) stones.
0.6 - 0.7 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
Stratum 1 contained a fragment of clear bottle glass at the interface with Stratum 2.

Test 3 was located 50 feet west of Test 1. Measuring 1.4 feet square, it had two strata:
0 - 0.6 feet: Mixed very dark grayish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/2) humic loam and clayey loam with strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay and abundant medium-sized (0.25< feet) stones.
0.6 - 0.7 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
Stratum 1 contained a fragment of an earthenware pipe at the interface with Stratum 2.

Test 4 was located 75 feet west of Test 1. Measuring 1.4 feet square, it had two strata:
0 - 0.6 feet: Mixed very dark grayish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/2) humic loam and strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay with abundant medium-sized (0.25< feet) stones.
0.6 - 0.7 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
No artifact or features were identified.

Test 5 was located 100 feet west of Test 1. Measuring 1.4 feet square, it had two strata:
0 - 0.65 feet: very dark grayish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/2) humic loam with abundant medium-sized (0.25< feet) stones.
0.65- 0.7 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
Stratum 1 contained a fragment of flat glass at the interface with Stratum 2.

Testing for the proposed location of the Route 205 Parking Area revealed stratigraphy indicative of grading associated with road construction, similar to that identified in the area in the 1991 excavations. No archeological resources were identified, and the single 19th Century artifact recovered is not indicative of significant deposits and may have been associated with site 44AP21, lying some 6000 feet to the west.

Trail to North Carolina Monument:

Testing for the trail to the North Carolina Monument consisted of 1.25 foot diameter shovel tests placed at 50 foot intervals. The results were as follows:

Test 6 was a 1.25 feet diameter shovel test. It had two strata:
0 - 1.0 feet : very dark grayish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/2) humic clayey loam.
1.0 - 1.1 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
No artifacts were recovered.

Test 7 was a 1.25 feet diameter shovel test located 50 feet southwest of Test 6. It had two strata:
0 - 0.3 feet: very dark grayish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/2) humic clayey loam.
0.3 - 0.5 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.

No artifacts were recovered.

Test 8 was a 1.25 feet diameter shovel test located 50 feet south of Test 7. It had two strata:
0 - 0.5 feet: very dark grayish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/2) humic clayey loam.
0.3 - 0.6 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
Fragments of modern beer bottle were recovered from the base of Stratum 1.

Test 9 was a 1.5 feet diameter shovel test located 100 feet south of Test 7 at the junction of the north/south and east/west portions of the proposed trail. It had two strata:
0 - 0.5 feet: very dark grayish brown (Munsell color 10YR 3/2) humic clayey loam.
0.3 - 0.7 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
No artifacts were recovered.

Test 10 was located 50 feet west of trail intersection. Measuring 1.25 feet in diameter, it had two strata:
0 - 0.4 feet: 10YR 3/3 humic loam.
0.4 - 1.0 feet: 10YR 3/6+(red) clay subsoil
No artifacts were recovered.

Test 11 was located 100 feet west of trail intersection. Measuring 1.25 feet in diameter, it had three strata:
0 - 0.1 feet: Mottled light yellowish brown (Munsell color 10YR 6/4) and brown (Munsell color 10YR 4/3) sand with small pebbles (road material)
0.1 - 0.6 feet: 10YR 3/3 humic loam.
0.6 - 0.8 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
No artifacts were recovered.

Test 12 was located 150 feet west of trail intersection. Measuring 1.25 feet in diameter, it had three strata:
0 - 0.05 feet: mottled light yellowish brown (Munsell color 10YR 6/4) and brown (Munsell color 10YR 4/3) sand with small pebbles (road material)
0.05 - 0.4 feet: 10YR 3/3 humic loam.
0.4 - 0.8 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
No artifacts were recovered.

Test 13 was located 200 feet west of trail intersection. Measuring 1.25 feet in diameter, it had three strata:
0 - 0.15 feet: Mottled light yellowish brown (Munsell color 10YR 6/4) and brown (Munsell color 10YR 4/3) sand with small pebbles (road material)
0.15 - 0.4 feet: 10YR 3/3 humic loam.
0.4 - 0.9 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
No artifacts were recovered.
Test 14 was located 250 feet west of trail intersection. Measuring 1.25 feet in diameter, it had three strata:

0 - 0.15 feet: Mottled light yellowish brown (Munsell color 10YR 6/4) and brown (Munsell color 10YR 4/3) sand with small pebbles (road material)
0.15 - 0.65 feet: 10YR 3/3 humic loam.
0.65 -1.0 feet: strong brown (Munsell color 5yr 4/6) clay subsoil.
No artifacts were recovered.

Test 15 was located 300 feet west of trail intersection. Measuring 1.25 feet in diameter, it had two strata:
0 - 0.35 feet: 10YR 3/3 humic loam.
0.35 - 1.0 feet: 10YR 3/6+(red) clay subsoil
One fragment of beer bottle glass was recovered from Stratum 1.

Testing for the proposed trail to the North Carolina Monument identified stratigraphic sequences associated either with agricultural usage evidenced by a pronounced plow zone (Tests 6 through 10, and Test 15), or with an abandoned roadbed (Tests 11 through 14). Neither of these are significant. Artifacts, especially beverage containers, associated with recreational uses were consistently found in the upper strata but do not compose a significant archeological resource.

Matthews Road

No archeological testing was conducted along the proposed widening of Matthews Road as the entire project will remain within the existing road prism (Figures 8 and 9) and will not result in new horizontal ground disturbance. Examination of historic maps did not indicate the potential for historic resources and its location away from sources of water suggest the unlikelihood of prehistoric occupation.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Archeological testing at the proposed location of road improvements, parking areas, and trails did not identify any significant archeological resources. A single artifact, a Pamplin type pipe bowl fragment, was the only indication of non-modern use recovered from the nineteen tests excavated. Visual examination of the proposed widening of Matthews Road and Route 201 indicated that the proposed project will not result in new ground disturbance outside of the existing road prism. No additional archeological activities are recommended for this project. .

Figure 7: Matthews Road looking South.

Figure 8: Matthews Road looking North.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank to staff of the Maintenance Division of Appomattox Court House National Historical Park for their enthusiastic support of this project. They offered every assistance and suffered my explanations of archeology with exceptional grace.

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